

Our Constitution has served us well for over 200 years, but it will continue as a strong, vibrant, and vital foundation for freedom only so long as the American people remain dedicated to the basic principles on which it rests. Thus, as the United States continues into its third century of constitutional democracy, let us renew our commitment to, in the words of our Constitution's preamble: "form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity. . . ." I know that the Prairie Rose Chapter of the Kansas Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution joins with me in urging all Americans to renew their commitment to, and understanding of, our Constitution, particularly during our current time of crisis, when Americans are fighting overseas to defend our liberties here at home.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight, and I want to especially thank my good friend, Congresswoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ from New York and applaud my House colleagues for their hard work in bringing us together here to acknowledge the important role small business plays in our economy and thank those small business owners for their many contributions.

I've always said that small business is the backbone of our State and national economy. Many small businesses are suffering in these trying financial times. Government contracts and spending are a vital source of revenue for small businesses, and in economically tough times it is vital that all levels of government continue to pay diligent attention to small business in their purchasing and contracts. Small businesses do not have high powered lobbyists, and it is important that we ensure that businesses of all sizes have access to government contracts regardless of their ability to buy influence.

Today I would like to discuss some important federal legislation that I believe will have important and positive implications for small business, job growth, and economic recovery in this country. Two of the top priorities for the remainder of the 108th Congress are reviving the struggling U.S. economy and reauthorizing the federal highway and transit programs.

I am also pleased to announce a congressional resolution that I have authored which will continue aggressive advocacy on behalf of American firms competing abroad, and specifically encourage small and medium-sized American businesses to explore trade openings and gain access to potentially lucrative markets, such as Iraq.

We all believe that America's small businesses must not be left behind in the globalization process. Although small businesses are the backbone of the American economy, the overseas investment potential of the small business sector remains relatively untapped.

This resolution's objectives are to continue aggressive trade promotion and advocacy on behalf of American firms competing abroad as well as to focus on the next generation of trade issues growing out of the changing global marketplace.

As Congress continues its work, I will be working to make sure that more good news is on the way for small businesses. And I want to assure you that I will continue to strongly support Federal programs that benefit small businesses.

Both our Federal and state government has an obligation to aid, assist and protect the interests of small businesses. The future of America depends on it.

TRIBUTE TO BASEBALL GREAT MICKEY VERNON

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, Saturday, September 20, 2003 will be a special day for legendary baseball batting champ Mickey Vernon as his hometown of Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania honors their favorite son by unveiling a life size statue of Vernon on the same ball field where he played sandlot ball. The statue will be unveiled at 2:30 p.m. at the Marcus Hook Memorial Field on Market Street.

Mickey Vernon is a hero in my hometown. Marcus Hook is a close-knit, working-class town on the Delaware River. The people of Marcus Hook have community spirit and have much cause for civic pride. One of the unifying bonds in our hometown is our great pride in the career and achievements of Mickey Vernon. In the ballparks of Marcus Hook the name of Mickey Vernon is revered. Even today, more than thirty years after his retirement, kids in Marcus Hook still play ball in the Mickey Vernon Little League.

Mickey Vernon, one of baseball's greatest first basemen of all time has earned a special place in the annals of baseball history. Mickey played 21 years in the big leagues, thirteen of those in our Nation's Capital where he played for the Washington Senators. He was known as a slick-fielding left-handed first baseman with a short, compact lefty swing.

In 1946, Mickey won the first of his two American League batting titles, hitting .353 while banging out a league-leading 51 doubles and knocking in 85 runs. He won a second Silver Bat in 1953, when he again lead the league with a .337 average and 43 doubles. That year, he also smashed 15 home runs and drove in a career-best 115 runs.

For his career, Mickey batted .286, drove in 1,311 runs, and hit 490 doubles. He played in seven All-Star games, and after a time held career records for first basemen in assists, put-outs, chances, and games played. He was durable and consistent, playing 115 or more games for 14 straight years.

It is well known that Mickey Vernon was President Dwight D. Eisenhower's favorite player. On opening day, 1954, with Ike in attendance, Vernon hit a home run in the 10th inning to defeat the New York Yankees. President Eisenhower called Vernon into his box to congratulate him.

Typical of many ballplayers of his era, Mickey lost two years in the prime of his career,

1944-45, because he answered his country's call to service during World War II. When we honor individuals like Mickey Vernon we promote the essence of what is good and wholesome in our Nation. Individuals like Mickey Vernon represent the essence of courage and endurance—the qualities that helped make our Nation great. He is a true American hero in every sense of the word.

Few towns in America can claim to be birthplace of a genuine baseball hero, and the people of Marcus Hook are very proud to call Mickey Vernon one of our own.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mickey Vernon for his outstanding career and his major league contributions to baseball, to his community, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and to the Nation with best wishes as well to his wife, Libby.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL ALL SCHEDULES PRESCRIPTION ELECTRONIC REPORTING (NASPER) ACT

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, on September 4 my colleague FRANK PALLONE and I introduced the National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting (NASPER) Act. This legislation would establish a national electronic data bank for practitioner monitoring of schedule II, III and IV controlled substances.

Our Nation has been fighting a long battle against the scourge of drug abuse and its devastating effects upon our society. The lives that are ruined, the families that are destroyed, and the loss to societal productivity are almost impossible to comprehend.

Unfortunately, one of the fastest growing areas of drug abuse is through the diversion of prescription drugs. This diversion can include such activities as "doctor shopping" where individuals go from doctor to doctor obtaining multiple prescriptions, or through the illegal sales of prescription drugs by doctors and pharmacists, or by prescription forgery.

My own State of Kentucky has been hit particularly hard by the epidemic of oxycontin abuse. In a 2001 hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and State, Rod Maggard, a former police chief in Harzard, KY, testified on the effects of the oxycontin epidemic on our State. He told committee members how the drug had "demoralized our community . . . it bankrupted spiritually, morally, and financially people all over our area." The Associated Press reported how Kentucky was experiencing a crime wave as addicts sought to obtain the drug oxycontin.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that one of the most effective ways we can help prevent prescription drug abuse is by getting information to those who are on the front line in this battle—that is the doctors, themselves. Today, in most States when a patient walks into a doctor's office requesting prescription medication, that doctor has no way of knowing if he is the first physician that patient has seen or the fifth. He simply has to rely on the patient to be honest with him. Now obviously, if this patient is an addict or is trying to scam the doctor, the doctor is not going to be told the truth. And yet